

FY21 ALTER Amendment #3 (Violence Prevention)

Sponsors: CM ALTER

Co-sponsors: CMs Casar, Ellis, and Tovo

Invited Co-Sponsors: CMs Kitchen and Pool (Both Council Members confirmed on the message board their support and co-sponsorship for establishing such an office.)

Strategic Outcome(s): Safety, Health & Environment

Establish an Office to prevent and reduce violence and facilitate community safety

Background: Cities across the nation have taken significant structural steps to shift public safety investments to prevention and reduction. In 2019, the Austin City Council created a Gun Violence Task Force to provide recommendations on local actions we can take to prevent gun violence. One such recommendation included establishing an Office of Violence Prevention. Several subsequent conversations with experts and implementers of this work have underscored the importance of strategic planning and community engagement to shape and guide the creation of an office that has the trust of the public and that implements strategies which have community support.

The purpose of this amendment is to establish a permanent office for community safety and violence prevention that is shaped and guided by community-led priorities and strategies. The initial work will be housed within Austin Public Health and the strategic planning process will determine recommendations for its permanent placement and relationship within the City of Austin's organizational structure. Initial work will launch this fiscal year, but the long-term strategy and structure will develop after external technical assistance facilitates a planning process that is inclusive of community voices. The initial strategies may include pilot-programs or demonstration projects, but the strategic planning process will identify recommendations for long-term strategic investments and areas of focus. The office will be responsible for shaping policy and coordination of violence reduction and community safety strategies throughout the city. Recognizing that poverty, violence, inequality, and harm are disproportionately concentrated in lower-income communities and neighborhoods of color, the Office and any contracts shall especially focus on supporting these communities, and will be guided by the principles of equity, inclusivity, transparency, and participatory decision-making, utilizing cultural sensitivity and trauma-informed-care principles.

Details

FY 2020-2021 Funding Amount: \$1,850,000

The initial funding will focus on outside technical assistance for strategic planning to develop and build out a successful office, and shall also initiate immediate violence reduction and prevention contracts.

Funding will be deployed for:

1. Staffing and External Technical Assistance: \$400,000
 - a. Authorize three Austin Public Health FTEs to shepherd the creation of the office
 - i. 1 FTE - Austin Public Health (focused on the development of the office and strategic planning, for immediate hire. This position should not be deployed for strategy implementation but should focus on overall policy and strategy)
 - ii. 2 FTEs - Austin Public Health (as/when needed to facilitate implementation strategies including the coordination of the public awareness campaigns and community engagement initiatives.)
 - b. External technical assistance for short and long term strategic planning, stakeholder facilitation, and community engagement assistance.
2. Immediate implementation of violence reduction strategies, public awareness campaigns, community engagement initiatives to include: \$1,250,000
 - a. Pilot programs to immediately prevent harm and violence in the community.
 - b. Initial pilot programs should attempt to address gun violence as well as violence and harm that surrounds sex work and affects sex workers, along with other priority areas.
 - c. Violence reduction strategies should be equity focused and reduce harm and violence in areas most affected by these issues.
3. Safe storage campaign: \$200,000
 - a. Gun locks: 1,000 @ \$5 each - \$5,000
 - b. Biometric lock handgun safes: 200 @ \$200 each - \$40,000
 - c. Bus ads: \$50,000 (partnerships with Capital Metro should be explored)
 - d. PSA content & social media buys: \$105,000